

## Volunteering with Birmingham Parks and Nature Conservation

Birmingham City Council's Parks and Nature Conservation division is committed to enabling community, business and voluntary sector groups and individuals to take a greater interest and active role in the improvement, management, protection, use and access of the green spaces and facilities that we manage.

We recognise that there are situations in which volunteers can make a significant and valuable contribution to the work and service objectives of Parks and in particular the Ranger Service. As volunteers, individuals put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping an organisation to achieve its service objectives.

### **Volunteering Opportunities**

Birmingham Parks offers the following opportunities for volunteering:

1. **Individual Volunteers** - working alongside rangers in a support role (e.g. Information Officer, Animal Carer, Assistant Ranger type roles).
2. **Groups of volunteers attending regular work days led by rangers** – working mainly on practical conservation tasks such as surveying and monitoring wildlife, and creating and maintaining habitats using traditional management techniques. These groups may also include employees from local businesses carrying out a single voluntary project linked to corporate social responsibility objectives or team building exercises.
3. **Groups of volunteers doing work on their own** - following an agreed programme of practical conservation tasks under the supervision of a trained and competent group leader. These groups are usually well established, with their own resources and public liability insurance whose members have regular contact with Parks Rangers.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. As a general rule volunteers working with Parks must be over 17 years of age. Young people under the age of 17 are welcome to attend events and activities or undertake work experience placements, or volunteer as part of a recognised award scheme such as Duke of Edinburgh Award or the Scouts.

### **Individual Volunteer Agreement**

In the case of individual volunteers an agreement has been drawn up which makes clear the relationship between volunteers and Birmingham Parks and Nature Conservation. The

agreement aims to ensure fairness and consistency and enable volunteers to know where they stand and what to expect (see appendix 1).

The agreement covers issues such as duties, representing the organisation, insurances, confidentiality, references and checks, training, expenses and terminating the agreement. Individuals who wish to work on a regular basis within the Parks Service and take on a recognised level of responsibility are required to sign the agreement. Normally this would follow an interview with the site manager to discuss the role, time commitments, etc and a six week probationary period under supervision. At the end of this period the volunteer will be advised as to their suitability and if appropriate the agreement will be signed. The decision of the site manager as to suitability is final.

### **Groups of Volunteers under Parks Supervision**

Groups that are supervised by an officer of Birmingham City Council or their agents, are covered by the City Council's public liability and employer's insurances. Birmingham City Council or their agents have a duty of care to ensure that volunteers are not exposed to risks to their health & safety. Volunteers will be given appropriate health and safety information, protective equipment, guidance and instruction to complete the task. All volunteers have a duty of care to themselves and others and any breach of good practice will be taken seriously.

Groups of this nature will not have unsupervised or repeated access to children and will not require a DBS check. Personal details will be required from volunteers for health and safety and equalities and performance monitoring purposes only.

### **Groups of Volunteers working on their own.**

Each volunteer event of this nature in Birmingham parks and open spaces will need to be approved by Parks and Nature Conservation. To work without supervision, the group will need to satisfy Birmingham City Council of the following:

- Supervision of the group by a suitably trained and competent named leader(s)
- Adequate and current Public Liability Insurance
- Accident and Emergency procedures/plan
- A work programme agreed with BCC and in line with the site management plan
- Risk Assessments
- DBS checks in place if working with young people

Approval for groups of volunteers to work on their own will be given by the Ranger Services Manager in consultation with Constituency Parks Managers and Parks Rangers.

### **Review**

This guidance will be reviewed at least on an annual basis or sooner if a health and safety issue arises.

**Officer Responsible for review:** Senior Ranger

**Date of Next Review:** April 2017

**Appendix 1  
Volunteering Protocol  
Parks Ranger Service**



**Volunteer Agreement**

**Particulars of the volunteer:**

Name	
Address	
Tel No	
E-mail address	
Date of Birth	
Work to be offered	
When normally available	

**Volunteer obligations**

**Duties:**

1. The volunteer undertakes with the Ranger Service to perform only such duties as it authorises them to carry out to the best of their abilities and to comply with all reasonable directions given by the Ranger Service .
2. The volunteer undertakes to meet the time commitments except in exceptional circumstances and where time commitments are not able to be met to give reasonable notice wherever possible to the Ranger Service so other arrangements can be made.
3. The volunteer undertakes to read and follow the City's policies and procedures in respect of health and safety, equal opportunities, child protection, customer care, and any other guidance notes, policies or strategies deemed relevant by the site manager; copies of which are available in the workplace.
4. The volunteer undertakes to act as an ambassador for the Ranger Service and act in accordance with the guidance given from the Head Ranger/site manager

**No agency**

5. No volunteer is the agent or representative of the City in any way or has any authority or right to assume any obligation of any kind on behalf of the City or to bind or commit the City in any way.

### **Insurance**

6. The City Council maintains insurance which it considers necessary which includes damage caused by its activities and those of its employees and volunteers who are undertaking authorised work for it. The insurance does not extend to unauthorised work carried out by the volunteer. It is therefore important that volunteers ensure that they comply with the conditions of the City Council's insurance and do not do anything which might result in the insurance being voided.
7. Volunteers are covered under the Employees' Liability section of the City Council's insurance which includes professional indemnity and public liability.
8. Regarding motor vehicle usage it is the responsibility of the volunteer to check if they are required to have business use on their insurance from their policy provider.

### **Motor vehicles**

9. If the volunteer is required to drive a motor vehicle in connection with the City Council's activities, they shall whenever requested, permit the City Council to examine their driving license and their motor vehicle insurance policy and current certificate of insurance.

### **Confidentiality**

10. The volunteer acknowledges that all information relating to the City Council (including its organisation, finances, membership and activities) and its clients is confidential and agree to keep this information secret and not use or disclose it except as authorised or required by their duties and the volunteer shall use their best endeavours to prevent the use or disclosure of it by any other person. This obligation applies without any time limit and for avoidance of doubt continues to apply if the volunteer ceases to be involved with the City Council's work.
11. All records in any medium or form including documents, drawings, private notes and accounts about the City Council and its activities and all copies and extracts of them made or acquired by the volunteer shall be:
  - i. The City Council's property.
  - ii. Used for the City Council's purpose only.
  - iii. Returned to the City Council at any time on request and, in any event, without demand if the volunteer ceases to be involved with the City Council's work.

### **Public and publicity**

12.No volunteer may at any time make any statement about the City Council to the press or other form of public media except with the City Council's consent.

13.No volunteer may represent themselves as working for or in any way connected with the City Council or its activities after ceasing to be involved with the City Council's work.

**Data protection**

14. The volunteer consents to the holding and processing of personal data (including sensitive data) provided by them to the City Council for all purposes relating to their involvement with the City Council, including but not limited to administering and maintaining records.

**References**

15.The volunteer agrees to provide names of referees who may be contacted by the City Council. All volunteers will have to undergo CRB check prior to commencement of duties

**The Ranger Service's obligations:**

**Induction, training and support**

- 1. The Ranger Service agrees to provide induction and training on its staff, the volunteer's role and activities to be undertaken by the individual.
- 2. The Ranger Service will provide a means by which the volunteer is able to discuss their role and any successes or problems.
- 3. A senior manager from within the Ranger Service will be available in the event of a dispute arising on individual sites.

**Expenses (N/A)**

4. At present volunteers receive no salary, gratuity or payment in kind. Uniform and training will be provided where appropriate

The volunteer and the Ranger Service agree to comply with this agreement. So far as is practicable the volunteer will do what they have offered to do and at the times agreed from time to time, but both the volunteer and the Ranger Service recognise that the volunteer is not under any obligation to work for the Ranger Service at any particular time or at all. Similarly it is recognised that the Ranger Service may refuse the offer of services of any volunteer and to terminate any work being done by a volunteer at any time, with or without prior notice and without giving any reason. Neither the volunteer nor the Ranger Service intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Signed:.....

Name of volunteer:.....

Date:.....

Signed on behalf of the Ranger Service:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

Last update 042016